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RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4335
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SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - APRIL 6

Leading Stories

1. The death of an 11-year old boy who was waiting for a heart transplant has brought to the forefront the problems with organ donations and transplants in Chile. The Llaima volcano has become active again and the Region of Araucania is on red alert.

U.S.-Related News

2. One of the guests at the dinner that Bachelet hosted for Vice President Biden on March 28, said the U.S. official had been a very engaging guest, "bombarding" Central Bank President Jose de Gregorio with questions about Chile's economy and talking in detail about the controversial bonus paid to CEOs in the United States. During dinner, Biden talked enthusiastically about the Democratic Party primaries and his decision to step down after Obama won the Iowa caucus (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000, 4/5).

3. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Chilean Minister of the Environment Ana Lya Uriarte will attend the 50th anniversary International Antarctic Treaty ceremony in Washington. The UK's claim over Chilean territory in Antarctica is likely to be one of the topics of discussion (La Segunda, conservative, afternoon, circ. 33,000, 4/3).

4. At the Antarctic Treaty conference, the Obama administration will present a proposal to protect the fragile Antarctic ecosystem by restricting the number of vessels and passengers travelling to the cold continent (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 4/6).

5. Asked about the Russian fleet in the Caribbean and the reactivation of the Fourth Fleet, the Chief of U.S. Naval Operations, Admiral Gary Roughead said: "The Russian and Venezuela navies are conducting joint exercises. If this is for positive reasons, there is no reason to be concerned.... The exercises we conduct in the Western Hemisphere -- UNITAS, PANAMAX...-- help those who don't have access to medical attention and allow many navies to practice... to ensure our systems can operate together. These are positive and constructive activities for the hemisphere.... The Fourth Fleet has no vessels, submarines or airplanes. It's a tool for us to conduct these operations more efficiently" (Fuerza de Defensa y Seguridad Magazine, February edition).

6. Chilean attorney Gonzalo Boye filed a criminal suit against six

former Bush administration officials for designing the legal framework to sustain the Guantanamo prison. Among them are former Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez; Vice President Cheney's advisor David Addington, and Secretary Rumsfeld's advisor William Haynes (El Mercurio, 4/5).

¶17. Column by Tamara Avetikian on the upcoming Summit of the Americas: "The region must look for Washington to make a commitment to counter the protectionism wave that is expected to expand worldwide and in the United States because of the economic crisis.... That is what must concern countries at the Summit. However, there are indications that some leftist leaders are more concerned with pressuring the United States into lifting the embargo on Cuba than with ensuring open markets" (El Mercurio, 4/6)

Frei Becomes Concertacion Candidate

¶18. DC Senator Eduardo Frei has become the Concertacion's official presidential candidate after winning the coalition's primary against Radical Party Jose Antonio Gomez by 64.61% to 35.3%. Some 60,000 people voted in this primary; Over 170,000 people voted in the 1999 primary between Ricardo Lagos and Andres Zaldivar (La Tercera, 4/6).

¶19. Both Eduardo Frei and opposition candidate Sebastian Pinera have ties to the business sector. Frei held a 12% share of Sigdo Koppers, but sold it and today has US\$ 4 million in assets. Pinera has shares in more than 30 companies, including commercial airline Lan Chile. He founded Bancard, the largest credit card issuer in the country, but sold it for US\$ 70 million. Forbes Magazine estimates Pinera's assets at US\$ 1 billion (El Mercurio, 4/5).
G-20

¶10. International affairs commentator Raul Sohr said: "What is most important is the change in approach of the G-20.... Climate and financial problems affect each and every one of us and everyone must contribute to the solutions. It is too soon to talk about a new international order, but there are signs that something changed in the G-20" (La Nacion, government-owned, editorially independent, circ. 4,200, 4/6).

¶11. Editorial: "In an unprecedented event, the world's main economies reached a consensus on a concrete and ambitious program to reactivate global economic activity.... The G-20 also agreed that the key element is the urgency with which the proposals are applied" (Estrategia, business and financial daily, circ. 30,000, 4/6).

Venezuela

¶12. In Qatar, President Chavez accused Bachelet of jeopardizing South America's unity by inviting the U.S. Vice President and British Prime Minister to the Progressive Governance Summit.... The international community has chosen to ignore Chavez... but this has had its costs... forcing him to seek refuge... with countries such as Iran, Sudan, North Korea, and Cuba.... It's time for the international community to publicly reject Chavez' rebuffs and set terms for his participation in the international arena, such as demanding minimal norms of respect" (El Mercurio, 4/6).

SIMONS